

Frequently Asked Questions about Outdoor Water Use

Updated 06/02/10

I heard I can now water my yard every day. Is that true?

Yes. The Governor recently signed a new state law. Citizens in Georgia can now water any day of the week regardless of your address between the hours of 4 PM and 10 AM. There is NO watering between 10 AM and 4 PM. **These new time limitations are ONLY for landscape water use.**

Can I now wash my car or pressure wash my house any day too?

No. The new law signed by the governor only relates to landscape uses. The old odd / even schedule remains in place for **all** other outdoor uses. Even and unnumbered addresses may use water outdoors for cleaning, recreation, etc. on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays; odd addresses may use water for these activities on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays. There are no “hourly” restrictions for these activities.

If I don't have an automated sprinkler do I have to water with a hose before 10 AM or after 4 PM?

No. The new rules allow hand watering with a shut off nozzle any time of the day any day of the week.

What if I have a little league game scheduled and we need to water the field to cool it down or settle the dust at 2 PM?

Sports fields and parks are **exempt** from the hourly restrictions. These areas may be watered any time any day of the week.

What if I put in new landscape? Do I have to water between 4PM and 10 AM?

No. Newly installed landscape is also exempt from the hourly restrictions for the first 30 days following installation.

What about drip irrigation?

Drip irrigation is completely exempt from the outdoor rules it may be used **any** day or **any** time.

Why can't I wash my car any day of the week too?

The changes to the **landscaping rules** were part of a new state law. The other outdoor uses were not addressed. As municipal governments / water suppliers we are required by law to follow all of the current water use rules. The current rules for uses other than landscape are no hourly restrictions on the odd / even schedule. These rules are also being considered for an update and we will make information available as soon as any changes are made.

What exemptions exist to the new hourly restrictions?

- Commercial Agriculture.
- Alternative sources of water (grey water, rain water, condensate, etc.)
- Irrigation of food gardens.
- Irrigation of newly installed or reseeded turf for the first 30 days.
- Drip irrigation or soaker hoses.
- Hand watering with a shut off nozzle.
- Water from a private well.
- Irrigation of plants for sale.
- Irrigation of athletic fields, golf courses or public recreational turf.
- Installation and maintenance of irrigation systems.
- Hydroseeding.

What if a professional pressure washes my house? Does it have to be on the odd / even schedule?

No. Commercial businesses are exempt from day of the week restrictions.

Now can I have a charity car wash on any day regardless of the address?

No. Unfortunately charity car washes like at home car washes are subject to the odd / even schedule. This is determined by the address of the facility hosting the car wash. Of course partnering with a professional car wash is exempt from the odd /even schedule because of their “professional exemption”. It is also a best practice for saving both water quality and quantity.

Being allowed to water everyday does not mean it is the best practice. Irrigation should supplement rainfall. Ideally most established landscapes in periods of limited rainfall need to be watered deeply once a week. The reasonable use of our water resources is essential in the region. Use the step test and visual inspection to determine if your plants and grass need to be watered.

How to perform the “step test”:

Place your foot firmly on your turf area.

Watch how quickly the turf springs up to cover your footprint.

If the turf springs up immediately (a few seconds) your turf is probably not in need of watering.

If the foot print remains or the turf slowly rises to eventually cover it your turf is in need of a deep watering.

Visual Inspection

Check plants in the early morning or late evening. Plants checked in the heat of the day will always appear to need water.

If the plant is wilting; yellow or grayish in appearance; has dried edges or browning; or loss of flowering the plant is probably in need of water.